

## **MINUTES**

### **Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Location: Belle Isle Nature Center**

**Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m.**

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

**Quorum established at 9:15 am**

Michael Curis

Rev. Lonnie Peek

Brad Dick

Motioned by: Bud Denker

Seconded by: Sommer Woods

#### **PRESENT FOR BIPAC**

Chair Michele Hodges

Bud Denker

Sommer Woods

Bryan Barnhill

#### **DNR STAFF PRESENT**

Ron Olson

Karis Floyd

Jacob Brown

#### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion to Approve Minutes for April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Motioned by: Bud Denker**

**Seconded by: Sommer Woods**

## **General Updates**

**DNR Chief Ron Olson:** 5/14/19 Attended City Council Meeting for the 2018 year in review that outlines some of the key investments made and improvements that have occurred and will occur.

**Michelle Hodges:** The Detroit City Council was welcoming and our relationship with them is maturing nicely. Some of our other members were there including Bud Denker, Rev. Peek and Sommer Woods and it was a great presentation. Thank you to the DNR and our partners for helping us to leverage the grants and the money allotted to us, and to the City Council for enabling us to continue that partnership as well.

**Bud Denker:** Would also like to recognize Karis Floyd; felt that his articulation of the work being done on Belle Isle was very well received. It helped to contribute to the understanding of the value that the DNR is providing to this park daily.

## **DNR Law Enforcement Update**

**Sgt. Todd Szyska**

- Will start summer staffing
- Operations as normal
- No big enforcement issues
- Would like to remind park goers to conserve your speed to 25 mph on the island

## **Park Operations Update**

**Karis Floyd**

**Jacob Brown**

- Most of the bathrooms are open though they have had some plumbing issues. They have been experiencing low water pressure due to the City doing work. Porta johns have been placed strategically to accommodate guests.
- Interviewing the potential candidates for the 4 ranger positions
- The community garden is about 60 percent complete
- They have hired the outdoor Explorer for Belle Isle Park
- Still seeking summer staff; please call (313) 821-9844 for opportunities. Need to be 18 years old. No driver's license required.

**Bud Denker:** Were there any surprises over the winter in terms of water main breaks?

**Jacob Brown:** Yes, we had about 5. We have been working hand and hand with the City of Detroit Water Department to get those taken care of. One of those breaks is over by Woodside and because of the placement of the water main break it will be a more difficult project.

**Bryan Barnhill:** Would like to offer encouragement and thanks to the staff that continues to do an excellent job maintaining the park and keeping it clean in spite of the infrastructure challenges and flooding etc. Keep up the good work.

DNR Director, Dan Eichinger was introduced.

### **Friends of the Detroit River - Update on Lake Okonoka Habitat Restoration Project**

#### **Sam Lovell**

- In 1997 the Detroit River was recognized as an area of concern. It is known as an international area of concern because we share the river with Canada. They are working together to resolve the issues.
- In 2014 they compiled a plan of 14 projects to aid in removing the fish and wildlife impairments.
- All of those projects are already completed or in a state of progress.
- An intensive study was done in advance to assess that the hydrology of the island would support the work to be done in the Lake Okonoka Project.
- The benefits of the habitat project include the preservation of the mesic wetlands, providing more acreage for spawning and nursery habitat for the wildlife and also 400 ft. of restored Great Lakes shoreline along the south side of Belle Isle.
- The lake levels are at an unusual high, contributing to the current flooding on the island.
- When the culvert is built The Strand is going to be raised about 18 inches.
- Will be filling in some low areas to help with the leveling of certain areas.

**Bud Denker:** You mentioned raising the Strand up 18 inches. What is the time frame for that and the culvert? If the water levels continue as they are what risk does this pose to your plans?

**Sam Lovell:** It wasn't until just last week that we were able to get approval for that culvert, so it would likely be late August before that culvert is ready to be installed. It will only take a few short weeks to do it. The bridge will be completed in June. Though there have been challenges and delays I think we are going to have it all wrapped up by the end of the summer. The issue of the water levels was an unusual situation but there are plans to remediate the blockage situation. We don't anticipate that this will be a forever thing but if climate change is the issue, we will all have to make an adjustment.

**Q:** Was there consideration for a dam? Because essentially it would have prevented this flooding.

**A:** If we had a dam it would not allow fish in for spawning and nursery habitat for the wildlife.

**Q:** What is your explanation for the failure to regulate the flow of the river into Lake Okonoka this oversight has caused flooding, damage to trees and also for greenspace to be unusable on the park for park visitors. A tree has fallen on the road as a result of this negligence.

**A:** These projects are going to make a big difference in helping to save potentially a million species in this next decade.

## **Infrastructure Updates**

**Amanda Treadwell**  
(See attached)

## **Outreach and Upcoming Events**

**Michael Terrell:** The year of 2020 is almost completely booked for both the Flynn Pavilion and the Casino.

## **Belle Isle Conservancy Update**

### **Chair Michelle Hodges**

- Koi Festival was very successful with the help of the youth
- The Grand Prixmiere May 31<sup>st</sup>
- Deeper Dive is June 27<sup>th</sup> featuring the Cuban Gar
- Keep Belle Isle Beautiful Initiative June 29th
- Metro Detroit Youth Day July 10<sup>th</sup>
- Kite fest July 14th
- Polish the Jewel October 10<sup>th</sup>

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS** (3 minutes each)

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Don Graham</b>      | Appreciates the visible improvements that have been made including the lovely lighting on the McArthur Bridge looking like a pearl necklace, likes that the fountain is operational. The Belle Isle Conservancy has done a great job and developed good partnerships.  |
| <b>Michael Betzold</b> | Has two requests for Eichinger: Immediately announce that there will be no extension of the current contract of the Grand Prix beyond 2021. Second, announce that there will be no consideration of any proposal by the Detroit Auto Show for any use of Belle Isle. Also wants to point out most of the committee is tied to Roger Penske in some kind of way. No park users have any designated seats on the committee and are excluded from discussions and decision making about Belle Isle. |
| <b>Lucille Nawara</b>  | Against the Grand Prix and feels it is in direct opposition to the Piet Oudolf Garden and to the original purpose of this island.  |
| <b>Sandra Novacek</b>  | Hates to see the park as it is now with all the concrete walls and debris from the Grand Prix and feels it is an assault on the senses. Citizens come to the island for peace and respite and that cannot be found this time of year with all the barriers, grandstands and signage for the Grand Prix.  |
| <b>Rick Demayo:</b>    | When Detroit acquired the island, they hired an architect to design it, and this design was broken up into 3 parts. The East end, which is the nature center, the  |

center section which is the activity center where there is canoeing and handball courts etc., then there is the far west end of the island which is the community end. The Grand Prix is a prime example of a community event and it helps to promote Belle Isle worldwide.

**Cacin Turner:** Small business owner of Detroit Jet Ski Rental would like to have their request for running the business on Belle Isle Park.

**Angela DiSante:** Belle Isle is a haven that the Grand Prix renders nearly unusable. This noisy, dirty, disruptive event can have a serious impact on mental well-being. This race does not benefit the citizens of Detroit.

**Donald Green:** Feels the DNR staff is incompetent and helps to enhance a negative outlook of Government agencies. Feels that those looking to enjoy the natural beauty of the park are disappointed by views of concrete barriers, chain link fencing and commercial banners. Visiting the fountain and other historical landmarks will be impossible due to it being turned into a billionaire's playground. Totally against the Grand Prix presence on the island.

**Angela Lugo-Thomas:** Against allowing the Grand Prix in a public park. Allowing Belle Isle to be turned into a racetrack is destroying the natural setting. Soon, this area will be completely closed off and with the warmer temperatures coming, we will soon see a repeat of the fiasco from last year when the DNR had to restrict cars. Belle Isle is supposed to be a park; park users should not have to see a construction zone full of concrete barricades, fencing, corporate banners, grandstands, pedestrian bridges, temporary sidewalks and shelters destroying the natural landscape. Is this the legacy that you all want to be remembered by?

**Carol Rhoades:** Parks are for better mental health. Car races are not therapeutic for relaxation and high decibels are not good for children or babies and a decibel level of 88 damages hearing. You cannot walk around Sunset Point due to the cement and barricades. The wildlife is not taken into consideration during Grand Prix either. Grass is cut preventing certain animals from being able to nest in their natural areas so that VIP's can have parking and that is unacceptable. It is not natural.

**Unknown Speaker:** You will never hear of them having races in Central Park. What is the difference between here and Central Park? Corruption. We have to stop the corruption here.

**Irene Welch:** Please stop the racing on Belle Isle Park. Let them use some of the empty land in Detroit. And leave residents and nature in peace. Our tax dollars support the island not rich folks' hobbies. I also disagree with more concrete on the island please do not overbuild.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS**

- Sommer Woods:** Detroit Jet Ski where are you guys operating out of now? Are there rules or regulations regarding jet skis? This goes back to a previous conversation about small Detroit based businesses and them being afforded an opportunity.
- Mr. Turner:** Del Ray fishing pier.
- Ron Olson:** I'm not sure who it was sent to initially, but this is something we can review and see what's possible and follow up on it.
- Bud Denker:** I just wanted to qualify that it's a job well done by the DNR with capital improvements, grants and partnership initiatives. This is very hard and difficult work so I just want to thank the staff and wish the park a happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Michelle Hodges:** I reached out to the Auto Show in the interest of transparency, to discuss if there are any plans for Belle Isle in association with the Auto Show. It was stated at that time that they do not have an interest currently. In year one they intend to stay close to their immediate campus which would be Cobo and Hart Plaza. With that said, they would be open to conversations about how Belle Isle can be utilized during the Auto Show season. We expressed our interest in having conversations about them because we do want to be a part of that Detroit ecosystem. If there is an important opportunity for Belle Isle to be a part of an appropriately scaled event, we would want that. With that said, however, I would caution everyone to please not lump the Auto Show into the same category of any large-scale event, meaning the Grand Prix. It is not the same thing and we would never allow anything of that scale to come. But we do need to be open to opportunities that make sense for the island. I hope that dispels some of the rumors that are out there at the moment that there are NO plans for Belle Isle. With the passing of Judge Damon Keith, I think it's important to outline that his values are an important part of our history and foundation. We are very aware of the significance of being empowered and that it can't be squandered. We are here to do good work. We mourn the loss of Judge Keith and we will honor him by continuing to keep his life's work alive.

Motion to Adjourn: **No Quorum**

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Meeting Concluded: 11:08 a.m.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

**June 20<sup>th</sup> , 2019**

Nature Center

Belle Isle Park

Detroit, MI 48207

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michele Hodges

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Concluded: 11:08 a.m.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

**June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

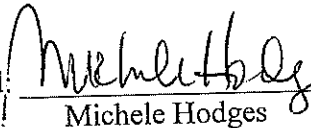
Nature Center

Belle Isle Park

Detroit, MI 48207

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Michele Hodges

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

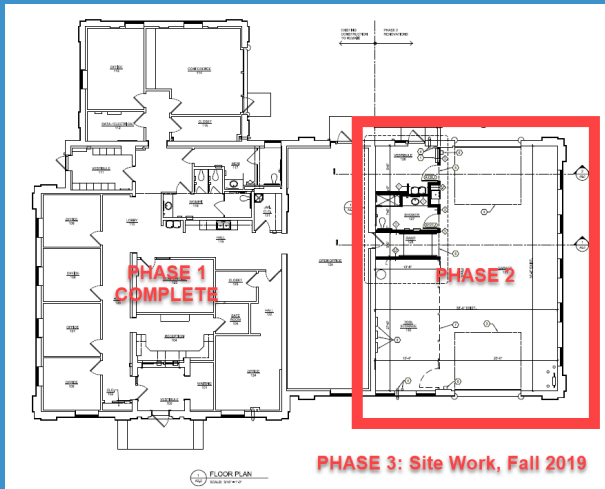
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# BELLE ISLE PARK

## INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE



Internal Affairs Building  
New Belle Isle Park Headquarters

DNR is now moved into the new Headquarters. Ranger staff will be working out of the White House until the maintenance operations are moved to the site behind new headquarters building.

Phase 2, DNR and DTMB are reviewing pricing to complete garage work. The construction period is 60 days.

The consultant is will provide draft site design for DNR/DTMB review. Construction is scheduled for June/July. Construction period is estimated at 60 days.

DNR is working with Arboriculture Society of Michigan Foundation to mill oak timbers from the Wet-Mesic Flatwoods for seat walls at the new office.



James Scott Memorial Fountain  
Masonry Repairs

### ADA Accessible walk:

Masonry work will be complete May 20th. WCI has been installing Marble the last two weeks.

### Masonry and Structural Repairs:

\$150,000 of the \$400,000 raised at the 2018 Grand Prixmiere event for Fountain repairs will fund masonry and water proofing repairs to the fountain, cascades and concrete weir floor.

Engineering technical writer will be retained to complete maintenance manual for Scott Fountain start-up and maintenance. Robert Carpenter, DTE, has been instrumental in starting up the fountain for the last 10 years, this will be his last year before retirement. DNR and BIC ensure his institutional knowledge is documented.

## BELLE ISLE TRAILS

### IRON BELLE TRAILHEAD & IRON BELL LOOP TRAIL

The DNR and BIC are reviewing map and interpretive panels for Trailhead kiosks and trail wayfinding signs.

Funding for Phase 1 Trail (Trailhead to Bridge) and The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation has awarded \$2.6 million to construction phase 2 of the trailhead and phase 1 of the trail. The Michigan Fitness Foundation is the fiduciary for this trail grant. To align all funding grants for phase one of the trail, anticipated start date is Spring 2020.

Phase 2 for the Trailhead will include - The restroom building, plaza area and amenities.

DNR staff met with Erik Nordin, local Detroit sculptor to review design scope of work for the trailhead sculpture. The design will include a coordinating design at the Ironwood trailhead on the north terminus of the trail.

The sculpture will be funded through the generous support of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

## *James Scott Memorial Fountain ADA Accessible Walk, Substantially Complete*



*Contractor is installing marble curbs. Punch list walk-through scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>.*



# Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory Repairs



Panoramic view of iron workers progressing with final painting of the upper truss replacement truss sections

## Progress update:



Upper truss replacement section and primer paint coating installed.



Tension ring steel anchor bolts installed and primer coat painted.

- All Steel work is complete
- Final Painting of upper truss work is underway. Scaffolding down 5/21/19  
Tentatively next Monday for mil thickness to be confirmed. The A/E will coordinate with DNR for last walk through on scaffolding.
- Electrician will be on site next week to re-power - Ideal estimates less than one week will be required. Electrical fixtures to be installed.
- Plumbing to misters is scheduled for Monday
- Cleanup and base grouting will occur following scaffolding removal. Scaffolding/Shoring will be removed the first week of June.
- Grout Base Plates
- Re-install Electrical
- Re-install Mechanical Covers\
- The dumpster of the truss sections was removed from the site last week.





## **Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory**

THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE WILLIAM DAVISON FOUNDATION ARE UNDERWAY

### **1. Belle Isle Aquarium and Conservatory Drainage Study**

- Contractor completed preliminary investigative work. Plumbing repairs have been identified and drain lines that require further investigation.

### **2. Belle Isle Aquarium Geothermal System Feasibility Assessment**

- Engineers are reviewing proposals for boring tests.
- DNR will schedule meeting with DTE and engineering consultants to review power upgrade to Belle Isle and coordinate future power needs of facility as needed.

### **3. Cost Comparison Evaluation of the original 1904 Conservatory Design vs. the current 1950 design to guide future improvements of the Conservatory glazing design and vestibule renovation**

- Final report has been submitted to DNR and BIC for review.

### **4. Aquatic life support system evaluation**

- Final report has been submitted to the DNR and BIC.

# The Detroit River

## Boating Access Study



- OHM has provided final draft for DNR review.
- Draft Report has been shared with City of Detroit GSD for review. GSD has noted that comments will be provided by the end of this week.
- DNR anticipates that final comments will be submitted to OHM by the end of the month.

### Athletic Complex Handball Courts-

- Architect has submitted the mesh ceiling to replace the existing ceiling. Installation of mesh will provide for play on 4<sup>th</sup> plane.
- Plans have been submitted to contractor for pricing.
- Once cost estimates have been provided, plans will be submitted to DLARA for review.

### Lake Okonoka Shelter and Playground Improvements -

- Contractor has excavated for shelter and playground footings.
- Shelter construction has been delayed due to wet weather conditions.

### North Shoreline fishing:

- Preconstruction meeting is scheduled for the first week in June.
- Scope of work will expand to include the relocation of the kayak launch from the west side of the canal behind the DYC to the parking area for the North Shoreline fishing area.

## PARTNER COORDINATED PROJECTS

### Belle Isle Boat House - Friends of Detroit Rowing (FODR)

#### Physical Assessment and Facility Master Plan

- Consultant has been selected for the Boathouse master plan and physical assessment and FODR is working to complete project contract.
- The contract is still in negotiations.
- Quinn Evans will finalize draft and incorporate results of water mainline pressure test when complete.

## PARTNER COORDINATED PROJECTS, Contd.

### DTE Boring - Electric Upgrade

1. Work is completed and the DTE will finish restoring the site on the Belle Isle side of the bridge. The boring site will be applied next week.

### DTE - Electric -

1. DTE will install underground conduit, transformers and stations around island in 2019. DTE and DNR have coordinated utility layout and work schedule. Work has already begun on Central Ave and is anticipated to continue through October 2019.
2. DTE has installed underground conduit along Central and will be starting along the beach area and work their way towards the south end of the island.
3. DTE will provide new service connections to facilities next in 2020.



### DTE Gas

DTE Energy's Scope of Work includes reestablishment of a permanent natural gas connection between Belle Isle and the Main land Gas system. The new main has replaced the temporary main currently running on the MacArthur Bridge. The temporary main has been removed and the permanent line is complete.





## PARTNER COORDINATED PROJECTS, Cont'd.

### BIC - ADA Access to the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory Garden

- The Belle Isle Conservancy has raised funds for design of ADA access to the garden from the east and west entrances.
- Consultants have been invited to walk-through site, May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Contract expected to be awarded the beginning of June.
- Plans expected to be complete for Fall Garden Party.

### BIC and The Arboriculture Society of Michigan Foundation - Sawmill Roof Replacement

- Quinn Evans and Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. are the architecture and structural engineering consultants providing engineering plans to replace the Sawmill roof.
- Roof Construction is to be complete this year.

### McArthur Bridge Maintenance

#### Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)

- Construction team will remobilize to complete sidewalk work on the bridge when DTE permanent gas line repairs are complete.

### Oudolf Garden Detroit - Piet Oudolf Garden -

Site Construction is expected to begin June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Irrigation and planting are scheduled for fall, 2019. The second phase of planting is anticipated for spring 2020.

The DNR is currently reviewing the perennials planting plan for the fall 2019 planting. OGD will submit spring 2020 planting list for the wetland and stormwater planting areas when finalized.



## PARTNER COORDINATED PROJECTS, Contd.

### BIC - Belle Isle Beach Revitalization

- Quinn Evans will finalize draft of assessment and facility and schematic. Future water mainline pressure test will be incorporated into results of when complete.

### BIC - Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory Garden ADA Access

- The Belle Isle Conservancy has raised funds for engineering plans to provide ADA access to the West and East end of the formal garden.
- The engineering plans will be completed for the Fall Garden party Fundraising event.





## PARTNER COORDINATED PROJECTS, Contd.

### Lake Okonoka Habitat Restoration

#### - Friends of The Detroit River

The new opening of Lake Okonoka to the Detroit River has been created during a period of the highest water level seen in the Detroit River in the last 40 years - approaching 100-year flood level - which would have inundated the low area around Lake Okonoka, even without the new opening. Realizing water levels go up and down in the Detroit River, this end of the island is now expected to see natural change as water elevations in the river fluctuate. Various measures will be incorporated into the Lake Okonoka project during the final stage of work to safeguard existing pathways and road infrastructure during extreme conditions like we are now experiencing, that include;

- The lowland section of Woodside Drive will be removed to improve hydrologic flow between the flatwoods and Lake Okononka. This is the road that is currently experiencing the shallow flooding that occurs on windy days. The East and West ends of Woodside will be reconstructed to provide access to two new picnic shelters and a play structure (funded by Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund.)
- Foot paths will be raised to ensure that they will not be flooded except under extreme conditions.
- Additional fill is being considered in a couple locations to raise grade along the north side of the Strand.
- The project is anticipated to be complete in early fall 2019. The Fish Passage Box Culvert has been approved by MDOT.
- The box culvert fabrication will take over 2 weeks and anticipated completion date for culvert work is now September.



Habitat Structures at the outlet of the future culvert. The top of the stone structures are at the 100 year flood elevation

## FY 2019 UPCOMING PROJECTS

- 1 (SAW) Stormwater, Asset Management, and Wastewater-
  - DNR reviewing scope of work provided by DWSD for stormwater and municipal water assessments.
  - DNR and GSD will coordinate with DWSD to have work completed under existing DWSD contract.
2. Engineering, Athletic Shelter Roof Replacement  
Work ordered issued May 13<sup>th</sup>.
3. Engineering, Maintenance and Operations barn and site improvements  
Work ordered issued May 13<sup>th</sup>.
4. Belle Isle Park Transportation Planning Study. The DNR will coordinate with MDOT to refine scope of work for study.